

IVA SNOOK

I've got most of this information here with

Hal Rover

Oral History in Palm Desert

Historical Society of Palm Desert

on June 19, 2003 with

with

Iva Snook and her ^{niece} neice

Juanita M. Snook

on Painted Canyon Drive

in Cahuilla Hills, Palm Desert

How many children were there in your family? Brothers and sisters?

Four, three brothers and just me. Juanita: then there was a still-born. The first one.

Now are any of the other brothers or sisters alive?

Everybody ^{is} ~~Nobody~~'s dead but me.

And you were the fourth child?

Third.

The third and?

There was another brother after me.

Donald?

When did they pass away...in the 90's - 80's?

In the 80's.

My mother passed away at 65 and my three brothers and my dad were all in their 80s when they passed away.

76s

Very good. Here we go again. . . we're off and running.

So there were three brothers ^{no} ~~and~~ sisters and you were the fourth.

I didn't have any sisters.

Howard, Walter and Donald. . . very good.

Do you have any remembrances of growing up in South Dakota? When you were real young like before you went to school or anything like that?

^{CHESTER} I can remember when I was about 5 we were living there in ~~Chancer~~ and I know that. . . I can tell you one thing that happened. We were out playing with other little kids and one girl swiped my jumping rope and she ran home and my brother and I went after it and she came to the door with a butcher knife. Her mother wasn't at home at that time and she was going to cut us up.

You remember anything before you went to school?

Well that was before I went to school.

Do you think you started in first grade - like at six?

No, well I was just six, but I would have been seven very shortly and I started to school in Sioux Falls. And I went into the kindergarten and not into first grade, because I was too old, but I never did go into kindergarten. And I was in three different schools when I was in first grade we moved so often. My mother while we lived in western South Dakota then momma got sick then my grandmother got sick and my mother went back to help take care of her and took Donald and me, that was the two youngest ones and then she had go to the hospital so dad packed

up the rest of us and come back there and that's where we were in Del Rapids and I went to the Del Rapids School and that's where we moved from there out here in 1919.

That was after high school at the start of high school?

I was in the 7th grade then and I graduated from high school in Long Beach - Poly High.

Let me ask you about what kind of work your dad did? Why did you move so much?

He did everything he could think of.

It was hard to get work?

He had a farm, worked in farm work and I remember helping him pick potatoes. He worked in a lumber yard at one time and when we came out here he had been working in the ~~Cemetery~~ sanitary and that was in 1918 when the flu first came to United States during the war and he was digging graves in that solid ground and I always did say that if we hadn't come to California we would put him in one of those graves before long because he was just working himself to death and we came out here and he worked 47 years, he was school custodian in Long Beach there and that's where he was when he quit in '65.

Let me ask you a minute before we get too far along to Long Beach because that's a whole interesting. When did the flu get to the United States?

1918.

It did. Was it brought back by the soldiers?

Yeah.

It was?

Uh huh.

It was? From Europe? Did it hit certain areas of the United States - like the farm area. You were in a little area.

Yeah we were I know that dad said at times that the whole family was down sometimes and there was no one to come to the funerals and he just dug graves and they put them in them.

Nobody to come to the funerals? This is too interesting.

All right so no body to come to the funerals. Boy that is tough.

We were all of us had it - we were at school and they use to send a nurse to take your temperature. And if you had a temperature they sent you home. Well I didn't have a temperature but they sent my brother home and they were all down in bed and I came home and took care of them and then I got it and the doctor said I had the walking flu cause momma was in bed with it but she took care of me all night and fed me something and so I just had that one night. Dad never got it but otherwise.....

Were there any deaths around there? Quite a few?

Oh, lots of them. But I don't the names of them now and you wouldn't know them anyway.

Was this in a small town?

Yes, ^{OK} Grand Rapids at the time we lived there, it's a pretty good size town now, but at the time we lived there it was probably only 15,000.

So that's a pretty darn good size community.

I know my brothers worked in the farms when they were going to school. During the summer time they worked the farms outside the town, sometimes they worked for their uncles,

sometimes they worked for somebody else. They worked and dad helped out there and I remember he was working in a lumber yard and he was riding from where we were out there taking care of grandpa and he five miles to ride and he road a bicycle into town and back home at night. He was working a lumbyard at that time.

Do you remember if they worked six days a week.

Oh yeah they worked six days a week - all but Sunday.

They had one day off, just in case somebody wanted to go to church?

We went to church all of us, that's one thing we all did. When we were in Chester that when's I was about 5 years old we only one church there so we went to that that was a Methodist church so we went to that, but when we were in Del Rapids there was a Baptist, Methodist, the Presbyterian and the Catholic.

So you had your choice?

We went to the Baptist church.

Did you? Was that the closest to you.

The Baptist, the Presbyterian and Methodist were all there on the same corner you might say. Right across the _____ from each other. The Baptist was the biggest one.

Let's go over to school a minute. ~~You left school when you were 13.~~ *went to country school 2 years*

~~17 (then she said. . . 14.~~

What was school like do you remember? Was it hard, was it all one room? *normal hard*

Mr. Long Beach
Oh no, we had rooms eight grade, they had a high school there too and my oldest brother was in the eighth grade and he didn't quite finish because we left in October so that wasn't let school out and he wouldn't go back to school after that. He said he had to go to work to help feed the family. So the other three of us went to school out here and we all graduated from Poly High.

Everybody went to Poly?

That's the only one there was at the time, but now there is about 7 I think. High schools, but Poly was the only one at that time. They said at the time, our class was 445 and they said that was probably the biggest class they will ever have, but now they have a half a dozen different schools and some of them about 700 graduating.

There was that many in your class?

In the graduating class.

That's huge!

In the graduating class of 1925.

Seems huge to me. Long Beach was well established.

Well, when we went first there there wasn't even paved streets. I remember the street we lived on on 10th Street, it was a mud puddle when it rained.

When you were growing up in South Dakota, do you remember about the use of horses. Everybody was using horses?

Oh, yeah. Finally my uncle got a car, that was the first time I very seen a car - ~~a red Rodemor~~. *Black touring car*
~~That was in your junior high?~~ *I was only 10 or 8*

Oh, no, that was when I was only about 7 or 8 years old. But then after we came out, then my three brothers all had a car at one time. My oldest brother was going to teach me how to drive and then he decided to get married and he said there's no reason to teach you how to drive you won't have anything to drive. So I never learned to drive until after I was married.

And, when you came out here?

Yeah,

So the animal was a way of life?

Oh yes.

In carriages and everything.

Or, on foot.

Exactly, some bicycles.

Dad rode a bicycle and I guess he was the only that had a bicycle at that time. My youngest brother had a bicycle out here and he delivered papers, but we either walked or had a ^{Buss} ~~horse~~. I don't remember that we ever owned a horse, my uncles, we lived on a farm for a while and two houses on there. We took care of grampa in one house and my uncle that run the farm was in the other house. Both my grandmothers they died the same day of the same month, just a year apart.

That's strange. Before we go to Long Beach now, let me ask you about do you recall that the war, we're in Long Beach now, I guess it's 1918 did the war had any effect on you in shortages or food or gas or anything like that?

Well, we didn't need any gas back then when we were in South Dakota, but that was World War I. And the last registered, what do you call it, the draft, dad was 45 and my

oldest brother was 18 so they both had to register, but the war was over before they were ever called. That was in 1918 when that was over. And of course in 1919 we came out here.

So far as the war went there was nothing.....

I know we had rations, but of course we always had chickens and dad always got two little pigs and raised them up and that was our meat for the winter and butchered them. I can remember momma making bread with rice flour they had send all the wheat flour overseas cause any other kind of flour would get wet and mold, but the wheat flour and they finally made flour of rice and I can remember momma making rice flour bread.

What was rice flour like?

It was as white but it tasted good.

Did it taste good?

Oh yeah. We never bought bread there. Momma always made everything we ate.

Exactly. I'm going back for just a minute.

Made bread or whatever we ate, we could get it out of the garden or the chicken house.

It seems like those acceptable times for them, you pretty much ate out of your garden or you grew some chickens.

We had a pretty big garden and Howard and my two older brothers and Dad was working away from home then so momma and my youngest brother and me, we did the garden. And I can remember crawling down the rows and pulling weeds out of the garden.

Was there much barter? Do you remember, if your dad went to work in town and someone said I can't pay you any money would he take a couple of chickens? *no barter*

No, he always got paid in money for what he did. We didn't have much, we didn't have any to spare. There were six of us there and the boys brought in something, but we had money. I remember we finally had a hospital bill didn't pay that until we got out to California and then when grandpa's estate was figured they had heard about that and they sent a bill out here to us so finally paid that up. So we didn't have any.

Do you remember about how much that bill was?

About ~~\$250~~. *no*

But it would be a change now wouldn't it?

Yeah.

Bet it was scary going to the hospital then?

Momma went. I can remember going upstairs to the, they did have a hospital later, but when momma was in the hospital it was just two rooms upstairs over something or other, I don't remember what was down there now, but I can remember going up there to see her and I was only about 7 years old or something like that.

The smell of ether and like. Let's go to Long Beach now. So you arrived in Long Beach about 1919. Is that right?

Yeah.

So you were starting in high school?

No, no I was only starting in the 7th grade yet. I didn't start. We were going to country schools and momma sent my youngest brother along too and he was only 5. So we went through school together. Even though he was two years younger than me.

I did see something about country schools in here, but I don't know where it is, but what was the country school?

It was just a one room school with all 8 grades in the same room. One teacher. I can remember we would have recess at noon there was a place where the older kids could go skating so they talked the teacher into putting an extra 15 minutes on that so they wouldn't have recess in the afternoons. They wouldn't have time to get their skates on so the younger kids got recess in the afternoons, but the older ones already got their recess at noon time when they skated.

It sounds like you had paved playgrounds where you could skate? *no on the river*

No, no playgrounds. No paved roads and I can remember going to school if we had gone around the road it would have been 2 miles to school so we cut across the ^{field} road and we use to get chased by the bulls. And one time my cousin the same age as me, we got lost in a snow storm one time and we finally found the ~~place to get to school~~ and just about the time we got there Howard and Walter my two older brothers they were getting ready to come out and hunt for us. We were lost, we couldn't see anything.

That's when you were younger in South Dakota?

That's when we were about in the third grade something like that.

Snow storm!

Blizzard.

When you went to Long Beach Poly was it difficult were there a lot of kids who just dropped out and went to work and didn't go to high school? Or was everybody expected to go to high school there? *I think every one was expected to go to school*

Everybody was expected to go to school there. If they didn't, as I said by the time we graduated we had 445, kids that graduated in that particular graduation. That was in 1925.

Have you ever been back to Long Beach ^{High} College?

Well, they had some reunions but I didn't go.

But any time after, did you go on the campus and was the campus as you remember in the same place.

Oh, yes. Except it burned down, let's see what year was that. It was after I was out of school. But they had a fire there and it burned down. I walked to school there. I had 9 blocks I had to walk and I could remember I got boils on my knees one time and so I took the bus.

Boils on your knees. What did your dad do when you got out there? What kind of work?

Well, he worked to begin with just a little while he worked in cement. He helped the cement contractor. But he got into the schools and he was there for 35 years or something. Anyway he retired. He was head caretaker at Lincoln School.

Was that a junior high school?

No that was elementary.

Right in the Long Beach area.

Yeah, right in Long Beach.

Was Long Beach really coming into its own then? There's lots of work and everybody was employed? Pretty well off?

Yeah. My oldest brother got into the cement work and he finally learned how to do that and he was a contractor when he got a little older. And my next brother, after he got out of high school he went into the insurance business. He worked in New York Life insurance as long as he lived.

Really!

My youngest brother he was the only one of us who went to college and then after he got out of college he went to work for the Metropolitan Water District back to Long Beach so we could have water. He worked for that and then he finally worked in Long Beach City Water Department. That's where he was when he passed away or when he retired.

When he retired?

Do you recall much about high school as far as classes and what kind of things they had you take?

Well I chose a regular business course, bookkeeping, literature and just regular things. I didn't have any special. And when I got out of high school I cashier in a shoe store. I was in two different shoe stores and they both went out of business.

Were there community colleges then, like two year colleges, like COD?

There was later, but not when we first went there. Long Beach Community College. My youngest brother took two years of that before he went to Los Angeles to finish his college.

What kind of a house did you live in in Long Beach?

We had a two bedroom house.

One story?

Oh yes.

Two bedroom and there was you and three brothers.

~~Dad~~ and three brothers had a double bed and single bed in one room and my dad and mother had a roll away bed that went in there and I had the davenport in the living room.

You slept on the davenport until somebody left.

Until the boys got married.

Everything was indoor plumbing and everything was like...

Everything was up to date.

And everybody had cars at that time.

A lot of them did and my three brothers before they got married they all had cars at one time. There were three cars here then. My oldest brother had a car. My two older brothers were married two weeks apart. And then my youngest brother had another car and he said that ain't the kind of car women and girls drive so he was going to teach me how to drive - it was an old star they called it.

A star? What's that star, do you know? Do you have any ideas? Was it a Ford product?

No, I don't know what it was.

Was it made in the Western United States?

I don't really know. I know his was a touring car. My one brother had a Ford coupe and then my other brother had an Essex at one time. And I didn't have any. I stayed at home. I didn't get married until I was 35.

How old was your husband when you got married?

44.

44 - nine years difference?

Yeah, there was nine years difference. We were married in 1940.

You were married in 1940. Where did you live then.

We lived in Lynwood and then we live in Compton and then we lived in Long Beach and then we out here. He was working in the ship yards.

He was? So during the war years he was in the ship yards.

He came out here from New Mexico in 1917 and he went into the First World War and he worked in the shipyards then, I think there was half a dozen different shipyards and I guess he worked in all of them at one or another time.

I didn't get your husbands name, I think.

No.

Could you tell me what it was?

William R. Snook.

William ~~R.~~^O Snook?

Ora - O - R - A. But he always went by Ora and when we announced our engagement, my youngest brother was there and he said you guys won't ever go for broke if you have to buy anything and there's just three initials Iva and Ora.

Simple names. Okay so you were married in 40 and he worked in the shipyards all during the war.

Two wars.

What happened after the second war to the shipyard business and your husbands working.

He worked for the government, he was an inspector in one shipyard during the second world war. Then after the war was over they didn't need him and he was out of a job and he built two duplexes - just the two of us. We built two duplexes in Compton there.

Two people.

Two of them, one side by each and we were going to build another one and hook on to it, but they said we were too close to the alley, so we stacked them up and built a two story house.

Did you do some of the work?

Oh, I worked right along with him. We did everthing from the plastering to the stucco to the painting.

Did you really?

The first house, Ora never had a paint brush in his hand, I did the outside and inside with the paint. I mixed the plaster, cement, stucco, I carried it to him and he put it on.

It's amazing to me that he would know how to do...

He knew how to do everything, we did the plumbing, we did the electricity he knew it all and I helped him I was his go-for as they call it. He wanted this I go-for this and go for that.

Did you buy things from a local hardware store?

Well, we bought that and when we came down here we made these blocks before we laid them up. We bought the cement in Compton there and then we brought this, what they call roof deck and these timbers we bought down here.

What was the store down here, do you remember? Valley Lumber.

Valley Lumber.

It was Valley Lumber, before it was what it is now.

They changed the name.

You say you made these blocks?

We made the blocks.

That's something you don't do any more.

We figured we know we didn't have too much money to use and we wanted to make it go as far as we could. And we figured at the time, I don't know what they call it now, we could buy those blocks 35 cents a piece. They 8 x 8 x 16 and we could make them for 11 cents. So that's what we did. We bought the cement in Long Beach and came down here and made them and he was still working in the shipyards at that time. This was weekend work and we would make about 90 blocks and let them dry over a week or two and come down and lay those up and make 90 more.

Was there any building code then. Did you have to call the county or anybody to come look?

No. When we built up in Compton there we had to get building permits for this that and the other thing. We took it for granted we'd have to do it down here. So when we came down here and Ora asked about where he would go to get the building permit, the guy told him we had to go to Cathedral City at that time. So he went to see him and the guy says "I'm not about to go up there to those boulders, so you do as you please". So we did as we pleased, but we weren't trying to cut any corners or anything so got we got along fine.

This was about '48.

No, that was in '54.

That you were building this?

That's when we started. We had to finish it in three years or lose it.

And when was the start. When did you first homestead that you recall? When did you first sign the paper?

'54.

No I heard it was '48 when you first . . .

No, it was '54.

Ora
~~Juanita~~: about the fellow who had the place before who had your five acres.

I don't know what his name was but he had it three years and he was about to lose it so just before he was about to lose it he signed off and we signed on.

Your signed on to the homestead in '54.

In '54.

Okay.

I don't know what his name was but I tried to sign on with both of us, but you couldn't do that at that time, you could only have one name on it so Ora had his name on it and signed it and after we got it all done and proofed up we put both our names on it.

Now did you build a house in Lynwood also?

Not in Lynwood, no. That's where we lived to begin with, but that house was already built.

So the first house you built was out here.

Oh no, the first house we built was our duplexes in Compton.

Okay, were they wood frame houses?

Stucco.

Were they block.

Oh no, they were stucco. Stucco outside and plaster inside.

Okay. I' forgetting more than you are all of a sudden. Told me that. So you did all the work yourself.

Did all the work ourselves. The only thing we had to hire was we had to get a licensed contractor to hook up with the sewer out in the street. We dug the pipe to put in the sewer, but he had to hook up with it. We couldn't do that, but we did the electricity, we did the plumbing, we did the plastering, we did the stucco, we did the roofing.

About what year was this?

That was 19⁴37, was when we built those and then we had built the one story then we waited. It was after we were married. We started the second one, well we were building it. The first time I ever saw you was when you came out to the trailer, we were living in our trailer next door when we sold our house and we were building these apartments down there and Juanita and her husband came to see us one time and that's the first time I had met her.

Did you build one of those to sell?

No, we sold it eventually, but then it came back on us and we like never to have got rid of it again. Boy were we happy when we finally got the last end of that.

It was big depression then.

We sold it once and then when it came back on us then there was no sales of anything. And then in 1978, I think it was, is when we finally got it off our hands entirely.

But by that time you'd been living out here a long time?

Well, we'd been he was still working in the shipyards and we were living in a trailer in Long Beach for a while and coming out here on the weekends building these.

That was about '54.

Yes '54 was when we started this.

Starting building here?

We had three years ~~54~~ and four is '57 and we finally gave us a patent which is the same as a deed and we had to have it finished. We didn't have to have it all completely finished on the inside but we had to have, in other words you couldn't move a trailer

move a trailer in and call that a permanent house.

So you had to build so big a place

You didn't have to have a big place, but you had to have a permanent house.

Like I said you couldn't move a trailer in and call that proved up (sounds like grooving up.)

They didn't require you to live in it for any amount of time?

No. No they didn't require that we live in it, but we had to have it finished all finished and we took pictures of it and sent it in to whoever in charge ^{IN} charge

Do you have any idea about what the property was worth when you bought it?

We didn't buy it.

It was just straight across - it was a homestead.

It was a homestead and we had to prove up and it cost us \$25 to file. when we proved up that we had it for 3 years we could buy it for \$100 - the whole five acres.

Three years you proved up on it and then paid \$100 for it?

Then paid a \$100 for it.

By that time you had a house on it and probably lived in it.

We lived in it.

What year did you finally move here to live?

Well, we had my husband's sister passed away and we had to get rid of her old house and we wanted to get rid of those apartments and they both came out of escrow at the same time. That was in '78 when we finally got rid of that address up there and this was our only address. And then we took off in the trailer and were gone for three months.

And that's the trailer that's out there? The same trailer?

Yep.

And you pulled that with a car.

With a car. We what we wanted first, we wanted to buy a new car. We had an old Packard and we wanted to buy a new car, we had to list that long and when you were down here they wouldn't sell us anything so we said we would go on. We had tire trouble a lot of times but we managed through it and we were gone for three months and we got back just before Thanksgiving. Then we did a lot of travelling otherwise. Up to that time we were a month here and a month there and so forth. Until, when did we get Anna, let's see when did we get her. Last spring.

Who was Anna?

My husband's sister.

She came to live here?

She was sick and she was 90 years old and couldn't take of herself and we brought her here and we had her for four months. He had another sister of his in Long Beach that we took care of for five months before she passed away. And then we had this other that was here for four months before she passed away. She was 85, and this other one was ninety before she passed away. Took care of both of them at the time. Then after that we didn't do much travelling and then my husband got to where he couldn't travel and I had to take care of him too, before he passed away.

But you were always living in this house?

Yeah.

When you came out here did you have to do septic tanks/

Yeah. Well we still have septic tanks. I don't think we'll ever have anything out here, there's too many mountains and things to get a sewer.

Did you have electricity right away?

No, to begin with we had a portable electric thing and we would start up and use it, but most of the time to begin with till we got ready for this we really didn't

need it and then we finally got busy - ten of us went together and got Edison to come in here and see if it was feasible to put electricity in. So then we got that and after they said it was all right then they wanted another \$1000 to start putting in and one of the ten, I don't remember his name now, but he said they could have the electricity then he would pay. They said he had to pay before the electricity. So the rest of us put in his amount and got electricity in here. And then just as we got this roof deck and timbers to cut we had electricity. We liked to never got it.

That was when you were building?

Yeah.

Originally building? So you go electricity up from the highway.

Yeah, it came in.

That's before you even moved down here. A long time before you finished.

See we brought a trailer down here and moved it in. We'd bring it down on Labor Day and take it back on Memorial Day. And we left it here otherwise and lived in that while we were building.

Did you ever put air conditioning in here?

Well, I've got that.

Oh, really! And when did you buy that in the 73s?

Oh, no. I can't remember when I bought that. That's the second one I've had. I bought that since Ora passed away. The other one gave out on me but I don't remember but that's all I've had.

Has it been 20 years you think you had.

Well, Ora has been gone 14 years, so I expect the first one was more than 20 years ago.

What do you remember about building this place, other than you made the bricks. You made them right here on the site?

Well, we put down - well this is a cement floor and we made our cement we got the cement in Long Beach and we went down in the draw, we had an old trailer it's still out there, that had a metal bottom to it we'd go there and shovel enough sand into it to make three ~~inch~~ sacks of cement and come up here and take out enough for one sack and do another box and then we would mix that in there, put the cement in and go back down for another load.

Where were you going? Down to the wash?

Yeah, right down here.

I mean way down to the botton where the water....

No, there's no water, it's right down here the other side of the road.

Oh, okay. Maybe by the churches or something.....

Juanita: no, by our driveway. As you turn as I told you.

Oh yes.

That road cuts across their property, okay.

So we just took sand out of our draw and bought the cementwe mixed that with a hoe.

So there's granite up on here. That's right - no mixers.

Juanita: You brought your water.

To begin with that house out there we built the middle part of that and then we bought a 1200 gallon tank and put it up on top of there and we had water hauled in for a long time. We got 1200 gallons for \$12 , a penny a gallon.

In the 50s?

Yeah in the 50s.

Now what else is in that little house, just a water storage?

No, after we got through building on this side out here, he wanted some place - he's a rock hound - and he wanted some place for his garden and he made all his equipment that he used for his rock - lapidary - that he used for his jewelry, you

know and all and then after he got that built, I said it looked lopsided we go to have *another room* ~~water~~. He said you just fill it up so the other side we built that too and of course that's just a store house.

He stuccoed that himself.

Oh yes.

He's a pretty good plasterer.

We just stuccoed the two places, what do you call them, duplexes before we came down. He stuccoed that.

Where was the water storage?

Up on top of that, we bought a tank and set it up on top of that middle part.

What year do you think water came in up that you could turn on the tap and didn't have to haul it? Do you remember when that water system was put in?

Yes. I remember when it was but I don't know what year it was.

Maybe approximately?

They put in a 250,000 gallon tank down here and there is another one up there and then to begin with we got some water down here and one of the ladies farther up come down and said how come you got water down here and I don't? They hadn't got pumps in yet and we were low enough down so it was flowing. By the time they had water up there we had pressure enough so that we could have water in the day and even in the shower and flush toilets. Most of them had to have a pump or something but we what we had up on the top there, we had enough pressure to get *Water* _____, But I don't what I know that the year that we had our taxes we had about \$60 a year on our 5 acres and then the year we got the water in our tax was \$450 . Jumped from \$60 to that.

Do you remember when the \$60

I tried to remember when that must of been about , I guess it was in the

70s. See '78 was when we first got rid of the apartments up there and I think it was earlier than that - no I think it was in the 60s, but I can't say when. But I know the first time we paid taxes we paid \$60 on the 5 acres and the next year we had the water was put in there and we had \$450 for tax bill.

Wow! And it was that same every year after that?

Well, until we got the water paid off and then it cut down again. And now my taxes - I got homeowners exemption and so my taxes are nothing to worry about here, less than \$100.

Let me ask you, first of all whenever you came out here, early the first days in 1954, did you ever have any encounter with Indians going through coming down for the winter, going back. Were there any sheep around that you noticed - big horns.

We never did see any down here but the guy that lived up the canyon up here took pictures of them when they came down to drink out of his stream that he had up.

That long ago, 1955.

Side B

Oh no, later big horn sheep drinking out of his stream up there.

Bartels, now he was -

Juanita - they're gone but the son is here.

Bartels children are still here. But when we first came out here they were just little kids.

What about your neighbors, besides them. When you first started coming out here were you all by yourselves.

There was the guy down here, the Shacks, but they're both gone. And their sons are gone now too, but they were there part of the time when we were

coming down here. And I know that when the electricity was coming in and we weren't here and Mrs. Shack came up here and we didn't have the roof on but we had the wall up to there and we had reinforcing rods very so often here and there is a tube that does around the whole thing and they was standing way up there and they wouldn't believe her that we weren't going to make a two-storied house out of it. So they wouldn't turn the electricity on and the guy we had been talking to was on vacation and the guy that we stopped there said well just wait a minute and he called the guy up on the telephone pole somewhere and he said I'll be up there before noon and he come up and turned it on so that we could saw these things and get the roof up.

You didn't use and old hand saw then?

Not to cut those. We used the hand saw to cut what little bit we had here he had an electric saw, what we call a mall saw and mall made it.

when we build the houses in Compton. But these great big things, we didn't want to use a hand saw.

Now what did you use for heating in the winter?

The fireplace.

The fireplace only? Your husband built the fireplace?

Yes, but we bought us a heatolater they call it.

Back when you were building this?

Yeah. Heatolater in that and he put the cement around it with walls around it.

So it was kind of fail safe, you couldn't do it wrong cause building a fireplace is not necessarily easy about getting it to draw.

Yeah, but that's all the fireplace I got. I mean that's all the heating I got for anytime.

You had some cold winters?

Yes, we had some cold winters I guess, but we would just put on a sweater.

And work faster.

Work faster.

You remember anything more about the homesteading. About the three years or did the government ever come out.

Nobody ever come out to see what we were doing.

Nobody ever showed up so far as you know.

Not anybody with - we had a lot of lookers they come to see what we were doing.

And so they got your \$100, and never bothered you.

Nothing was ever said to us about what we were doing with until we finished it and sent in our time that we finished up and sent them pictures of it that it was built and that was it and they sent us a patent they call, as I said, that was the same as a deed. Like I said we went to get a permit and the guy said he wasn't about to go up in those hills do anything about checking, you can do as you please.

People trusted people though, didn't they?

Yeah.

Do you remember, did you put concrete down in the walls? With steel rods?

Yes, and while he was doing that I was out with a little box picking up stones about as big as my hand, filled those up and then we made what they call grout. Which is a very thin cement and poured that in under those and I've forgotten how far apart they but there's one about every so often.

You didn't grout everything?

Not every one, no.

About every two feet or so?

Well, whatever it was, like I said he knew how much it was and we put that - but see these walls are eight inches thick, the walls that separate the bedrooms and that are only half that- they are four inches thick.

Do you every remember an earthquake while you were in here?

Oh, yeah. We've had some earthquakes.

Did it shake the house? There doesn't seem to be any cracks.

There's one over there, just the other side of the air conditioner, otherwise there's no cracks anywhere.

When you built the house before you put the walls did you dig footings. . . real deep.

Well, we dug them down and then we used the blocks(rocks) and put those for foundation instead of pouring it inside, but we put those and then built it on up.

I see. So that's like footings below the dirt was blocks (rocks).

Yeah, but I've forgotten how far down because it went around the whole house and then after we got those in we had to put the cement for the ~~door~~. *floor*

And what's that, about 4 inches thick?

Well, it's probably more than that because we leveled it all off and then we put wire around it and then we picked up all kinds of rocks and put it in here, because we were mixing our cement with a hoe and you couldn't mix it with the rocks in there so we put the rocks then we mixed the cement and then we poured it on top of those of those in order to finish it off and then we'd go down and get another load. I've forgotten how many loads we get, but I think it was about half a dozen of those that we got down there.

When you weren't building the house in that area in the 50's or 60's, when you were going to the store, to get food or something, what was in Palm Desert.

It was just a little old country store down there , but we did most of our buying in Long Beach and brought it with us because we didn't want to take time out to shop down here because we had such few time we wanted to use it on working.

Did you ever go to the Community church here that was over on Portola by the school?

Oh yeah we did - we didn't do it while we were trying to build in here so much, but we went over there a long time ago.

Did you ever have anything to do with the George Washington School?

No.

Because your kids were all gone?

I never had any kids. So I didn't have anything to do with the schools, but we went to that Church over there and then when they finally built this one down here . . . we went down here. But we went to the one that was over there on Portola.

Palm Desert Community Church? Do you remember anything about the early days of the founders or any - Cliff Henderson was out here developing in 46.

I know the name, but I don't remember doing anything with him.

His brother owned the Desert Magazine, Randall.

Of course, we had the minister, Dr. Miller.

Dean Miller?

Dean Miller - twenty-five years that he was in the church we was down there and he was down there when we first went down there and I remember his wife at that time she was the director of the choir.

Was he over at the other church?

Oh, yes.

He was?

He was over there to begin with when we first went down there and then he came over here and we had the celebration of the 25 years and then he got sick, I guess he's still alive.

You think he is, I don't know.

He was the last I knew.

Do you still go to this church here?

Yeah.

The Palm Desert Community Church - it's Community Presbyterian.

We finally joined that, like I said, I'd always been a Baptist until we come down here and there wasn't a Baptist close. So we went down here and so we finally joined.

Do you remember anything about the church cause it was built the big one was built and I've been to many a funeral in that place because it's great meeting place.

Now their building more, you know.

Mostly school or offices.

Well, it's Sunday Schools and office work, that's what it is now or what it will be when they finally get it done.

Pre-school and everything there.

I don't know if they are going to have -

Juanita: it's Sunday School rooms.

Iva: But they have that day school below it don't they?
It's still going.

Was there any restaurants or anything? Did you ever go out to eat, or you were probably too tired to go out to eat.

My husband didn't like to go out to eat - he like my cooking. We never went out very often, we did once in a while. We'd go down to McDonald's or someplace like that.

There wasn't much here in the early days.

Oh no, there wasn't much of anything here, but you know when we first came down here we turned on the 111 up this way there wasn't a thing on the road until we turned in here and finally they got those_____.

Did you turn off the road in Palm Springs?

No, we turn off the road right down here at the foot... *hill*

This was only a two lane highway when turned to come up here.

Was this the 50s when you were building this place? How did you get in - through Cathedral City - wasn't there a drive in like Date Palm or something?

Yeah, we come down Date Palm we would cross over when they had a rain you couldn't get through over there.

Right. Right. And it seemed like it rained every year.

Yeah. I can remember being in a rain one time and my husband's two sisters were down here for Thanksgiving and it rained so here and we were out of water, the guy that brought the water was on vacation so I had everything I could think of underneath the eaves down here and we got water there and carted it in to put it in the bathroom to flush the toilets.

Worked out okay.

Then the girls wanted to see what was down there under the trailer courts and a great big trailer it had washed the bank out and there was about that much water and was hanging over the bank. The wheels were still on top of the bank so the girls thought that was really something she _____me and my trailer.

You remember in the 50s was there a post office?

Yeah. There was a post office down here.

Do you remember where it was?

It was the same place it is now.

Right across the street.

On Portola.

El Paseo?

Yeah, El Paseo. But we didn't have the one up on Hovely. We finally but we had to go clear down to the road guard we had our mailbox and put it down there and we had to go clear down there to get it. Then we finally got them up here and now we got the lock boxes.

When do you think mail delivery came up here?

When we got paved roads, they wouldn't come beyond the paved roads. So that's why they stopped . . .

They are not paved yet, some of them.

Well, they're past us. To begin with they stopped right out here at our mail box. That's as far as they would go because they wouldn't go beyond the pavement. And we gave them permission to go through, our property originally was clear over almost to Paul's fence over there, through the draw, because you couldn't build on it, that all belonged to us. Then there was a

guy up here that had owned a little piece of ground but he wouldn't give them permission for them to go pass there. So they said well we'll just stop down here so then they gave us back the permission we had given them to make the road through our property and all they wanted was just a little square piece down there.

Turn around?

A turn around down there before there hadn't been anything and then we tired to oil our roads here one time.

Oh, yeah?

And we put that but that didn't last very long so then finally we got that real pavement in, but that's just recently.

Mostly about dust?

Yeah.

And rain, and anything like that.

We talked about Shack, ^B Martells. Do you remember any other neighbors, the first neighbors you met when you started to build out here?

Yeah.

Was there anybody else up in here?

Yeah. The Hoffmans. The Hoffmans built the house right up here. They started at the same time we started this. Mrs. Hoffman brother was the guy sit and watch here that. At that time they were down there at the corner of Portola and Chora and Pasanya, that little house down there, that's where Hoffman's lived at the time and then they built this one up here. And they started it about the same time....and Paul down here ^{BOWIE} ~~Dewey~~, his mother and father was the one that built that one to start with

and he was in school at that time. He was just a kid and after they passed away and he got married and he was down there he made just about that much more house on it, but they had originally about half that much house. But they built it or started it about the same time we did this.

So this was a quiet neighborhood for a while.

Just the coyotes and we use to fix our breakfast and take it out there on the back porch and sit and eat and we use to see the coyotes come up and they'd stop and look at us and decided that we were harmless so they'd go on about their business.

Did you ever have a dog or any cats?

No.

Cause the coyotes. There's probably still coyotes up here?

Oh yes we see them, but Juanita sees them oftener than I do, but I remember one time not too awfully long ago there were two of them - one came down that side of the building and this un this and they met out there at the driveway and went on down the road. We was sitting out here on the front porch one time and there were some rabbits that was eating around there over around Paul's lawn and all of a sudden they zip, they took off like a shot out of a gun and we thought well what was the big idea and pretty soon a coyote came down the draw there. They had heard him before we knew anything about it.

When you used your fireplace in the winter, did you have to bring your firewood from Long Beach?

We went out in the desert and got it. We hadn't bought any firewood since we've been down here.

You haven't even yet?

No.

Well you got the last of the firewood then I think.

I've got a pile of it out there behind the house. I've got enough for at least another year.

That's great.

Anytime we'd got out anywhere and go down past the discarding places where we'd seen any, we'd pick up the stick and bring it home. And then of course when Russ and Juanita built over here we got all their extra scraps that they had cut off the ends of their 2 x 4s and so forth. We had that when they built. And we had rented those apartments in the ^{Cornington} valley and the kids were always bringing home a lot of where they were building around and they were going to build something. But of course it just got kicked around there so we picked it up around the house and brought it down here burned it up. And then whenever we had trouble with trees or anything like that we'd bring those down and burn them up.

So keep your eyes open.

We haven't bought any any wood since we got there. Of course when Ora was here he could go get it. One time they were building this water shed up here and had to take out a lot of trees and they had it all piled up down there ready to take away and so we went down there and gonna get some of it and a young man come along with a truck and he said Ora shouldn't climb up on

there and he said let me go up there. So he went up and got it and got a whole load for us and the next day he went up and got some more brought it to us.

A nice guy.

Yeah, he was up there with some guy, I've forgotten his name now, but he was up the canyon here aways. It seems like you find a lot of nice people in this world if you look for them.

That's right. They show up when you need them. You were always a homemaker, but you had some jobs early on, but then you worked at home - sewed, cooking and baking. And you worked when 8 nephews and nieces came to town. Was that in Long Beach.

Yeah, that was in Long Beach. I helped raise them.

A couple of families moved out and showed up?

No, my three brothers - one of them had four children the others - each had two. Well, I helped when they were born I was to help and as long as they were little I sewed for them and did a lot of things for them, but after they got as big as me I said they could sew for themselves.

What was Faraget Sunday School? Is that what it says here? Do you remember?

Juanita: your Sunday school.

Your Sunday School classes?

That's in Long Beach.

In high school - 21 to 25.

Yeah, something like that. That's Thelaythia, that's what it's suppose to be. I don't know how you spell it, but that's what is suppose to be.

Is that something you taught?

No, no. I was just in it. Down in the Baptist Church we had a mixed class, boys and girls. And the girls had what we called the Thelaythia club. And we had different groups and we had sewing and Bible class and so forth. We met once a month there and that's what that is - that's the Thelaythia Class. And then I sang in the choir and I took care of all the music in the choir. That's where I met my husband. He come to sing there and I had to give him the music and that's how I got acquainted. In fact he said one time he chased me but I caught him.

So what are your days like now. Do you like to watch any special shows? Can you still read okay, are you eyes still in good shape?

I can still read.

Do you go to doctors locally?

My eye doctor sent me notice, the last time I was to him was a year ago.

And he wanted to see you again?

He wanted to see me but I cancelled it - I got a card that said for me to call and make an appointment, but I called and said I didn't think I wanted - cause the last time I was to him he said I either had to have new glasses or an operation on this eye. Because of cataract coming. Well I can't see that it is any worse and so I don't want to have an operation at my age, I don't think it's necessary. I think I can do without it. So I just cancelled it so the gal said well you call if you want to come in.

Is that a local Palm Desert.

Yeah, what's his name - Schwartz. Edward. Down there at Eisenhower.

So any other doctors that you see?

Rochester. He's my regular medical doctor.

Every five years or so.

If I need him and go get my prescriptions that I take for him. He gives me prescriptions, gives enough for three months and gives me three refills so that makes it over a year.

Now I heard that you had a car and you were driving until the other day.

Oh yeah.

You still drive?

I did.

Did they give you a regular eye test.

They did, yeah.

How often, every four years?

Yeah, it depends. The last time they gave me a five years. And I still got six months left on it.

Six months. So five years ago you would have been 93, 95. And then, of course, on my 90th birthday, I had to take an eye test. I never had to take a road test since I got my first test. I didn't get my first license until I was 60.

Really? Out here?

That was after I was married. And of course when I was married Ora was either home or else the car was gone. So I didn't particularly care about it, but when he got the gout and hip trouble, he said you better learn. So I said okay and when I was 60 years old I got my learners permit.

Did you learn in an automatic transmission or was it a stick shift?

No, I learned in an automatic. I never had to do a stick shift. Ora taught me how to drive but I said now, of course, I don't think they would let me do that, I'd have to do some kind of school. I didn't do much of any driving cause he did the driving and I never did pull the trailer he pulled the trailer all the time, but then he had eye trouble and had to have an operation on his eyes and I had to do all the driving. The first time he had the one eye. I did for five months before he could drive again and then about 18 months after that he had the other eye taken care of it was about four months that I did that. And then of course after later years, when he got so that he couldn't drive at all I did all the driving. So I guess it was a very good idea that I learned how eventually.

Yeah. What kind of a car did you learn in? Do you remember.

Oh, it was a Buick.

1960?

Yeah, it was the first one we had, then we had a packard and the last one was a Chevy and now I had a Ford, but then I got this Ford after Ora was gone. ~~Mother and father had a Chevy but I was 18 years old and I gave up on it.~~ Then I got this Ford Taurus, but now its gone. So I think I'm going to have to depend on Juanita cause I don't think I can pass the test cause I can't think fast enough to get another.

Maybe it's time.

At 98, I'm halfway to 99.

Are you in January?

It's June now.

Tomorrow is June 20th. That's the sixth month. Your actually right.

I'm halfway there to 99.

You seem like you're really in good health and lot of energy.

Well, it's like I said, as long as I sit here I got all kinds of energy, but when I get up and try to do something I run out of steam pretty fast.

Juanita: she still hangs up her clothes

Yeah, I still wash and hang out my clothes out.

Hang them out to dry.

I don't have room for a dryer so I have to hang them outside, but I kinda like that anyway.

Did you do everything is a washtub when you first moved out? You didn't have a washing machine cause you didn't have electricity?

Until we got electricity, I was carrying my washing back to Long Beach or Compton, wherever we were living at that time. I didn't have room for a washer, it ^{Sat}~~said~~ out on the porch for a long time. Then when that finally gave out and I went to buy another one they didn't have one like that and they wanted a center one, but they wanted more for an just old wringer type than they did an automatic, so I finally got the automatic. But I still have to hang them up.

Well, this is a good place for that.

I hang out my sheets, take them off the line and put them back on the bed in about an hour or so.

So generally speaking your life in Palm Desert, Cahuilla Hills, has been uneventful. You just lived a good full life.

Yeah. Got a lot of nice memories, cause as long after my husband retired from the shipyards, we did a lot of travelling and we would be gone sometimes I know for two of them years we took of for a month and we went over to Utah and over to Nevada and we took in all the Forest camps and be gone about a month and then back. But the first time we went we were gone for three months and we went back as far as Salt Lake City and come back.

Now did he retired.....

He didn't retire until he was almost 68. He didn't retire particularly, he got laid off because he had been inspector during the war. After the war was over he was in a private yard and then they didn't need him anymore so he was off and that's when we built the duplexes. And then after we got them built took off and he retired and then he went back again after we got through with those, he went back - he didn't have his social security all built up so that we could get our pension so he said he go back and do that and he said I'll go back for a year. But he worked for 12 years. And then he retired and then like I said he was almost 68 and the guys down at the yard said what do you want to retire for. At that time we had sold the apartments and they was having trouble with and they came back on us and we were spending half the time he worked swing shift the biggest part of the time and I said I was a shipyard widow, and so we were

working over there about half the time in the day time and he was going down the shipyard at night and he said it was beginning to make him _____. And he said we got to do something. So he just quit down at the shipyard. Then we finally got rid of the apartments of course. Then by the time he got through with that they cut ~~him~~ off retirement slowly so we got the smallest amount of social security, So I'm getting his social security and also his civil service pension and that's what I'm living on now.

Thank God for that, huh?

He's been gone for 14 years too. And I'm still getting his pension.

Did you say he died in 88. What month?

January 2nd. So that's 15 years now.

Well, it will be in January - it will be 15 years.

Well, we talked about a lot of stuff. Well, I don't know. Can you think of any other good thoughts we ought to add on here? Like...

I don't know what else to tell you, except but as long as he was alive he had a birthday in February so for years all of his nephews and nieces from Minnesota and Northern California and I don't know where else, descended on here and we would have about 15 of us here in one bedroom. We put up tents and what have you, the come to celebrate his birthday. But some of the rest of them passed away before he did so then Juanita's been celebrating my birthday for the past three or four years. I sure didn't expect to get to celebrate with them. On my 90th birthday she had three parties for me. Then she waited until 95 and then

all of a sudden she had party for me and 96 came along and she gave me a cake and the last was my 98th birthday and she got a big cake and took it to our Sunday School class and had party time at Sunday School.

That's wonderful. It's nice to have relatives close by.

I don't know what I'd do without her.

There's nothing better to say than that.

One of the guys in the Class, he thought I was her mother and I said no I was her aunt. He said well you've known her all her life and I said no I didn't even meet her until after she was married. We were married in 40 and she and Russell were married in 45 and the first time I ever saw her was when she came out to the trailer and we had just started this and she came out to the trailer and we got a big kick out of that - she came into the trailer - we didn't have this trailer - it was a little bitty 15 footer and it had a bed across the back and she and Russell were sitting back there and Ora was travelling to the apartments to check on something or other and he come home and he come in and I was sitting up front at the table and I said do you know these folks and he looked back and said I don't think I know him, but I think I know her. He'd never seen her before but he had seen her husband. But it had been years since he had seen either one of them, but he'd never seen Juanita before, he thought he had seen her.

Juanita: He thought he knew me.

Iva: he thought he knew her.

Juanita: that was a good joke

Juanita: my husband had been out after he graduated from high school before he was married.

We both were in-laws. Her husband's father was my husband's brother. See her husband was the oldest boy and my husband was the youngest of 12. So there's a space between.

Good blood, good blood.

Juanita: but he had been out after high school. We were born in Minnesota so he and I think three ~~boys~~. *Brothers*

Two boys.

Yeah, two others and my husband.

I don't know I didn't see him at that time.

Juanita: but they come by because gramma was with them and Ora saw them.

I knew Ora at that time, but just barely.

Juanita: but what they were doing was staying with relatives. One of the boys would have a relative of the three and so they didn't have to pay much. It was just the gas in the car and they came from Minnesota and went clear down into Mexico and on to Washington and back through the Dakotas. And so they were gone for three months I think. But somebody always had some relatives.

See Russell and Juanita, her husband, they went to school together. So they had known each other

Juanita: since eighth grade.

Wow, a lot of years.

When was your house built?

Juanita: he passed away in January of 88 and we moved in April 1st of 88. He got to go through and see how it was laid out. He use to say that if he knew my husband was going to have so much trouble he wouldn't have given the property, cause you see we had to subdivide.

They didn't want us to subdivide.

Juanita: and we had at that time, in order to do it, we had to come and inspect this house...that it was liveable, that the septic tank, we flushed it and everything to see.

I don't know why they had to know if this was liveable or not but they did in order for them to build over there.

Juanita: we had a lot of red tape, but we managed to get through it all.

Yes, you did. Very well.

Okay, shall I stop and we'll rest.

What will I do about trash, Iva doesn't have too much so you just make a deal with her. So Juanita would pay 1/2 of what I paid and then I would pay them. But now it's the other way around. After they left and they finally decided it was too much trouble and too expensive for him to take it all up there so he just quit. I don't know what all the particular were, but anyway he just quit. So then we had to do it on our own and then we went up here to the boys as we called them and but they finally decided that whoever owns that place up decided there that I'm being so old that I was likely to fall and do something and then they was afraid I would sue them so they wouldn't let Russell put the trash in then. So then Juanita got busy through the City so then I pay her half of what it costs to pick it up.

J uanita: picks up at my place. So she was always getting in her car and bringing it down.

I can't walk over there but as long as I had the car I could go over there.

Juanita: she'd mail herself.

If I wanted to mail a letter, Juanita always brings me the mail. But when I wanted to mail something, I could go down to the car and do it.

Juanita: so now I just take.

So now I'm just dependent on her now since *the accident*

Juanita: that was just last Saturday.

I think I had a guardian angel sitting on my shoulder cause I didn't get hurt. I got black and blue knee and I got another spot up here that I don't know how in the world I thought I ever hit, but that's all that happened to me but the car got *tatted*

Car took it bad?

It took it bad. I don't think it's fixable.

Maybe that guardian angel did have a message.

Cause I crossed 111 and you know there wasn't a thing on the right and just after I parked up there they just went zoom, zoom. They just went by but there wasn't anybody on the road when I crossed. So I don't know. It's like I said I had a guardian angel that was guarding me.

Very true.

Well, I better. *stop*

No more dialogue, but tape still going.